



# News Release

Office of the Louisiana State Fire Marshal  
7919 Independence Blvd.  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806

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CONTACT: NATHAN McCALLUM

DATE: September 29, 2003

PH: 225-925-4911

FAX: 225-929-7795

**"FIRE PREVENTION WEEK", OCTOBER 5-11, 2003**

**Theme for 2003: "When Fire Strikes: Get Out! Stay Out!"**

Baton Rouge - Governor M. J. "Mike" Foster and Louisiana State Fire Marshal V. J. Bella have announced that the week of October 5-11, 2003 has been proclaimed "**Fire Prevention Week**". This year's campaign theme is "**When Fire Strikes: Get Out! Stay Out!**".

This year's theme encourages children and families to recognize the role they play in keeping their home fire-safe by focusing on two key safety messages: 1) Installing and testing smoke alarms; 2) Practicing home escape plans. In Louisiana, 84% of all fires occur in the home, and most of these fires are preventable.

"When there is a fire, you may have only two minutes to get out of the home. Having working smoke alarms and a well-practiced home escape plan are crucial so that everyone knows exactly what to do if a fire breaks out," said Fire Marshal Bella. "Taking a few moments to inspect and correct common fire hazards in your home can make a real difference in your family's safety and well-being. Far too many firefighters and American citizens lost their lives and homes to fire in 2002. In Louisiana alone, 89 lives were lost in fires in the most recent reporting period (1999). As a team, we can make a difference in reducing these preventable losses from fire."

According to the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association), the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week since 1922, half of U.S. fire deaths occur in the six percent of homes with no smoke alarms. "Smoke alarms are the most effective early warning device there is," said Fire Marshal Bella. "Having a working smoke alarm in your home cuts your chance of dying in a home fire almost in half." 89% of the fire deaths in Louisiana were in homes that were either not protected by smoke detectors (66%), or in which damage was so extensive that the presence of detectors could not be determined (23%).

The Fire Marshal's Office is an active supporter of Fire Prevention Week, promoting fire and building safety throughout the State. "Fire safety is everyone's business, and as a team, we can drive home the all-important message of fire safety," said Bella. "So, this year, "When Fire Strikes: Get Out! Stay Out!", and do your part to make Louisiana fire-safe."

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